



HULLESS BARLEY

Hordium vulgare

A fast-maturing, cool-climate grain, barley is one of the most widely-adaptable grains. It is more drought-tolerant and higher yielding than wheat. It is a rich source of beta-glucan soluble fiber, which reduces cholesterol and blood glucose levels.

PLANTING

Barley does well in a wide range of soil types. Plant in the fall (late Sept. to early Nov.) or in early spring (late March through Mid-April). Work up a fine seed bed in slightly alkaline soil and avoid adding too much nitrogen. Barley will tolerate a bit of shade so can be planted next to taller crops such as corn or amaranth. We plant ours in rows 6" apart with seeds 1" apart for easier weeding. You can also try broadcasting seed in blocks.

GROWING METHODS

MAINTENANCE

One late May weeding was all we needed. Barley does not usually require water as it dries down during the drought season.

HARVEST

Harvest barley when the seeds rub out of the seed heads easily and cannot be dented with a fingernail. Our planting took 4 months to mature. Pick individual seed heads off the stalk or cut stalks with a sickle and stack with seed heads all in the same direction.

THRESHING

Threshing is quicker if you have harvested just the seed heads. Either way, put the material on a tarp on a hard surface and shuffle-dance to rub the seeds out of the seed heads. Winnow in front of a steady fan to clear off the chaff.

PROCESSING

SEED-SAVING/STORAGE

For seed-saving, just put aside some of the seed for next year. To ensure the seed is dry, we usually leave ours in paper bags in a warm, dry location, for a month or two, then store in Rubbermaid bins.

COOKING TIPS

In our culture, barley is traditionally used in soup, but makes an excellent rice substitute in any whole grain recipe. Barley flour can also be used to make flat breads.

YIELDS & LABOR

We yielded 5-8 lbs (13-15 cups) per 100 SF. Reportedly yields up to 24 lbs per 100 SF. In our small trials we spent about 1 hour per pound of grain in total labor. Labor needs would be reduced on a larger scale.

BBGP RESEARCH

VARIETIES

We have successfully grown Tibetan, Purple, and Sangatsuga barley. Several hundred varieties exist and are worth experimenting with. Both 2-row and 6-row barley can be used for malting; 6-row has more protein.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Barley is believed to be the oldest cultivated grain at several thousand years old.